

Message Text

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42

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSC-07 SSO-00 INRE-00 CU-05 PM-07

CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 EB-11 IGA-02

SS-20 SP-03 SAM-01 DRC-01 /089 W

----- 063286

O 071355Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9249

WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USIA WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE

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DEPT FOR AF/C CUTLER

WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC/HOORAN

SECDEF FOR ISA/ELLSWORTH

USIA FOR MCGINLEY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL CG

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR US GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO FESTIVAL OF
ZAIRE 74

REF: KINSHASA 7638

1. REQUEST FOR AIR FORCE ASSISTANCE IN MOVING EQUIPMENT TO
ZAIRE FESTIVAL '74 RAISED REFTEL OFFERS US GOVERNMENT PIECE
OF ACTION IN WHAT MAY WELL BE BIGGEST EVENT IN US-AFRICAN
RELATIONS IN MANY A YEAR. THERE ARE ALSO, AS ALWAYS, IMPORTANT
ARGUMENTS AGAINST PARTICIPATION.

2. CONS:

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(A) IF USG NOT INTERESTED, WE ARE REASONABLY CERTAIN PROMOTERS WILL SPEND NECESSARY MONEY TO TRANSPORT MATERIAL TO KINSHASA. THEY HAVE TOO MUCH AT STAKE NOT TO DO SO. THUS, WE ARE BEING ASKED TO MAKE CONTRIBUTION THAT WILL EITHER MAXIMIZE THEIR PROFITS OR MINIMIZE THEIR LOSSES.

(B) IF WE EXTEND THIS ASSISTANCE, WE MIGHT HAVE CREATED PRECEDENT WHICH COULD BE EMBARRASSING IF FURTHER REQUESTS COME FROM OTHER QUARTERS.

(C) THERE COULD BE DOMESTIC CRITICISM OF EXPENDITURE PUBLIC FUNDS ON COMMERCIAL VENTURE, DESPITE MAJOR GOZ INVOLVEMENT.

(D) DIRECT YIELD FOR USG PERHAPS MINIMAL. OVER-ALL IMPACT ON OPINION IN AFRICA AND AT HOME WILL IN ANY CASE COME LARGELY FROM JOINT EFFORTS OF AFRICAN AND AMERICAN ARTISTS. HOWEVER, WE ARE REASONABLY CERTAIN OF FAVORABLE INITIAL IMPACT IN KINSHASA AND WE HAVE PROMISE - WHICH WE COULD PROBABLY GET IN WRITING - OF "MORE THAN PROMINENT MENTION" IN RESULTING FILM WHICH AT MINIMUM WE WOULD THINK WOULD INCLUDE AIR FORCE PLANE ARRIVAL KINSHASA.

(E) THERE IS RISK WHICH SEEMS TO BE DECLINING DAILY THAT FESTIVAL WILL FALL SHORT OF EXPECTATIONS.

3. PROS:

(A) FOREMAN-ALI FIGHT, THREE-DAY FESTIVAL OF AMERICAN-AFRICAN ARTS AND ASSOCIATED EVENTS HAVE POTENTIAL FOR INCREDIBLY FAVORABLE IMPACT US-AFRICAN RELATIONS. RESULTING FILM WHICH PROMOTERS THINK WILL DRAW MORE PEOPLE THAN WOODSTOCK FILM MAY WELL BE SEEN THROUGHOUT AFRICA AND ACROSS US. US GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION WITH MAJOR EVENT OF INTEREST TO MILLIONS OF AMERICANS AND TENS OF MILLIONS OF AFRICANS IS WORTH SOMETHING.

(B) GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE IS PARTNER IN THIS ENTERPRISE AND UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD APPRECIATE USG ASSISTANCE. BISENGIMANA, PERHAPS SECOND MOST IMPORTANT MAN IN ZAIRE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IS, WE BELIEVE, READY TO MAKE OFFICIAL REQUEST IF WE ARE READY TO RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY.

(C) WE SUSPECT ZAIROIS, WHO CANNOT DIFFERENTIATE IN THEIR MINDS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE UNDERTAKINGS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY, VIEW EVENTS AS INVOLVING USG IN ANY CASE. SO WE STAND TO PROFIT FROM SUCCESS AND TO BE CRITICIZED FOR FAILURE. THUS, MARGINAL EFFORT TO

HELP ENSURE SUCCESS IS IN OUR INTEREST.

(D) DOMESTIC IMPACT OF USG HELPING MAKE SUCCESS OF EVENT THAT HOLDS ATTENTION OF ARTISTIC AND SPORTING WORLD, PARTICULARLY AMERICAN BLACK COMMUNITY, COULD BE HIGHLY POSITIVE IN BOTH HUMAN AND POLITICAL TERMS.

4. ONE OF RISKS IS ASSOCIATION WITH SHADY CHARACTERS, TO SAY NOTHING OF POSSIBLE CROOKS, BUT IT IS OUR JUDGMENT THAT THE FESTIVAL PROMOTERS ARE LARGELY DISASSOCIATED FROM THE FIGHT PROMOTERS AND THAT THEIR PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION AND BONA FIDES WOULD STAND SCRUTINY. ALSO FESTIVAL IS THREE-DAY EVENT PRIOR TO FIGHT WHEREAS FIGHT COULD BE THREE-MINUTE FLOP. THUS, PROPOSAL TO SUPPORT FESTIVAL WOULD ASSOCIATE US GOVERNMENT PRINCIPALLY WITH ARTISTIC SIDE AND WITH OVER-ALL EXCITEMENT OF FIGHT, BUT IN MANNER THAT MINIMIZES RISK OF ADVERSE PUBLICITY.

5. RECOMMENDATION: CALL IS PERHAPS CLOSE ONE BUT FROM PUBLIC AFFAIRS STANDPOINT AND OVER-ALL POTENTIAL FAVORABLE IMPACT PAO AND I RECOMMEND THAT EVERY EFFORT BE MADE PROMPTLY TO MAKE C-141 OR C-130 AVAILABLE. HINTON

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